

Returning to Jaffa the two companions continued their voyage thence and arrived at Alexandria on March 12, 1831. In 'the ancient land of Priestcraft and of Pyramids,' which next to Syria had from the beginning 'formed the most prominent object of his travels,' Disraeli remained for more than four months.

To Sarah Disraeli.

From Alexandria, I crossed the desert to Rosetta. It was a twelve hours' job, and the whole way we were surrounded by a mirage of the most complete kind. I was perpetually deceived, and always thought I was going to ride into the sea. At Rosetta I first saw the mighty Nile, with its banks richly covered with palm groves. A grove of palms is the most elegant thing in nature. From Rosetta five days in a capital boat which the Consul had provided for us, with cabins and every convenience took us to Cairo through the famous Delta. This greatly reminded me of the rich plains in the Pays Bas, quite flat, with a soil in every part like the finest garden mould, covered with production, but more productive than cultivated. The banks of the river studded with villages of mud, but all clustered in palm groves; beautiful moonlight on the Nile, indescribably charming, and the palms by this light perfectly magical. Grand Cairo, a large town of dingy houses of unbaked brick, looking terribly dilapidated, but swarming with population in rich and various costume. Visited the Pyramids, and ascended the great one, from the top of which, some weeks afterwards, a man, by name Maze, whom I had slightly known in Spain, tumbled, and dashed himself to a mummy. Very awful, the first accident of the kind.

A voyage of three weeks in the same boat to Thebes : banks of the river very different. The Delta ceases at Cairo, and Egypt now only consists of a valley, formed by a river running through a desert. The land is, however, equally rich, the soil being formed by the Nile; but on each side at the distance of three or four miles, and sometimes much nearer, deserts. The Libyan desert on the African side is exactly our common idea of a desert, an interminable waste of burning sand; but the Arabian and Syrian deserts very different, in fact, what we call downs. Landing on the African side, one might, where the desert stretches to the very banks, find a ship of Hadgees emptied on the shore, in the most picturesque groups, some